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MORPC Announces 2010 Sustainability Award Winners

(Columbus – October 7, 2010) The Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission's (MORPC's) 2010 Summit on Sustainability and the Environment took place October 5 at the Center for Science and Industry (COSI). The inspiring event explored the challenges in going green and featured prominent environmental speakers and a variety of workshops. The event also marked the occasion for MORPC's first annual Sustainability Awards given in the areas of Agriculture & Local Foods, Energy & Air Quality, Greenways & Water Quality, Materials Management, and Sustainable Growth.

The Agriculture & Local Foods Award was given to the Franklin Park Conservatory for its Growing to Green Program. The Program along with the Scotts Miracle-Gro Community Garden Campus have been a showcase and resource for community gardens in Columbus. In the last 10 years, Growing to Green has provided assistance to nearly 100 community gardens for Columbus neighborhoods and schools. The Conservatory continues to embrace community gardening and the local foods movement as a major part of its master plan for expansion.

The Energy & Air Quality Award was given in a tie to both Mayor Michael B. Coleman, City of Columbus and to SolarVision, LLC.

The Mayor and the City of Columbus received the award for the Green Fleet Policy. As part of the Get Green Columbus initiative, over 5,100 City vehicles under Fleet Management are operated in an effort to reduce emissions and improve energy efficiency. The fleet has been recognized nationally, and their internal anti-idling policy has helped reduce fuel use by 4.5 percent in 2009.

SolarVision, LLC also received the award for providing and financing photovoltaic solar arrays to customers. SolarVision finances 100 percent of each project and fixes the rate customer pays for the solar power. They recently installed 300 solar panels on top of Evening Street Elementary School in Worthington.

The Greenways & Water Quality Award was given to Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District. Franklin Soil and Water promotes greenway preservation, green infrastructure connectivity, environmental protection and water quality. Through empowering communities, neighborhood groups and businesses to take positive steps towards conservation, their efforts have made environmental protection relevant to the residents of central Ohio.

The Materials Management Award was given to the Waste Not Center. The Center receives donations from individuals and businesses of supplies that would otherwise be discarded and in turn makes them available to teachers, artists and non-profit organizations at no charge other than a small membership fee. The Center also promotes recycling and reuse.

The Sustainable Growth Award was given to the Columbus Zoo and Aquarium due to the scope and breadth of recent projects completed, underway and planned for the Zoo. Sustainable projects include the development of a geothermal heating and cooling system, the installation of active daylighting in the Zoo's warehouse and a zoo-wide conversion of all tableware, cups and plates to compostable materials.

MORPC is a voluntary association of 47 local governments in central Ohio serving the region through planning, direct service, public policy information and innovative programming and intergovernmental coordinating services in the areas of transportation, land use, energy conservation, the environment and housing.